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MAY 16 '58

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Plans)

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SUBJECT: [REDACTED] Brief on "Communist Reactions to Stalin Purge"

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1. The attached [REDACTED] brief is an analysis of the pattern of internal CP criticisms and discussions as revealed in the letters from CP members published by CPUSA and CP Great Britain.

2. The analysis reveals that some Communists are wondering if Marxist-Leninist doctrine is not invalidated by the evils of Stalin's practices that could be carried out in the name of doctrinal orthodoxy. Many letter writers are seeking to reassure potential non-Communist allies that Stalin's sins will never be repeated and that they need have nothing to fear under a "Socialist" regime. Some are questioning the validity of Lenin's authoritarian principles of "democratic centralism" and one-party rule. In criticizing Stalin's dictatorship, several letter writers have taken the occasion to attack the existing leadership of the CPUSA and CPGB. All this questioning and criticism of Communist shibboleths cannot help but undermine the "iron discipline" of the movement, a discipline which depends entirely upon unthinking obedience, and either cynical manipulation of the truth or boundless capacity for self-delusion.

3. It would appear that the rank and file reactions analyzed in the attachment could be utilized in attacks on other Communist Parties. The questions raised by CPUSA and CPGB members would probably embarrass and harass non-Anglo-Saxon Communist leaders as well.

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4. [REDACTED] has on file the documentary material on which the brief is based, and will make it available upon request in any specific usable form desired.

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[REDACTED]
Chief, Counter Intelligence Staff

Attachment

Distribution: DD/P

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